



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING




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TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Michael P. Flanagan, Chairman 

SUBJECT: State and Federal Legislative Update

STATE

**Michigan Department of Education Budget – House Bill 4438,
Representative Terry Brown**

The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on K-12 began deliberations on April 17th with overviews provided by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and Senate Fiscal staff. There were many questions about the federal stimulus funds and the Governor's proposal to move the Library of Michigan to MDE. Questions were also raised about the proposed new staff position to help districts in deficit. The questions at this time are general in nature, as the Subcommittee members are just beginning their deliberation. There will be further discussion over the coming month.

The next hearing of the Subcommittee on April 28th is for public testimony. Depending on the amount of testimony given at this hearing, the following hearing on May 5 may also be reserved for public testimony. At this time, the Senate Subcommittee expects to report the budget on May 19th.

Robert Bobb, Detroit Public Schools Emergency Financial Manager

Mr. Robert Bobb testified before the Senate Education Committee on April 23rd. This hearing was an introduction for the Senate members as the original Advice and Consent hearing had to be cancelled. The hearing provided Mr. Bobb the opportunity to present his vision for Detroit, as well as the concrete actions he has already initiated.

Online Learning

The House Education Committee has held hearings about online learning with presentations by Michigan Virtual University (MVU) and Genesee Intermediate School District's (ISD's) GenNet.

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Chairman Melton expressed concern about the funding for MVU and his interest in seeing the private, non-profit organization weaned from state funding, especially given the troubled economic and budget situation. Rep. Melton introduced an amendment that was adopted by the House to cut the state funding for MVU's operations in half (this doesn't affect their other resources). It is unclear what will happen to this amendment in the Senate.

The presentation by Genesee ISD's GenNet addressed the opportunities that GenNet provides to the 21 school districts in Genesee County. GenNet is also used by a consortium of districts - Midland ESA, Saginaw ISD, Shiawassee RESD, St. Clair ISD, Lapeer ISD, and Genesee ISD. GenNet provides online courses, as well as interactive television courses, in teacher led, blended instruction, teacher facilitated instruction, and self-paced delivery formats. A seat time waiver was provided county wide for the program serving 21 districts and 139 students.

Turnaround Schools and Intervention for Failing Schools – House Bills 4787, 4788, and 4789, Representatives Tim Melton and Bert Johnson

House Bills 4787, 4788, and 4789 were introduced to address state intervention for the lowest performing schools in the state. These bills began with hearings in the House Education Committee and may move by the end of May. The bills provide for turnaround schools, with the approval of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, to be located near those schools at the very bottom of the performance spectrum. It is the Department's understanding that the bills are targeting only the 30-40 schools with the lowest proficiency levels in English Language Arts and Math. These bills provide for a Reform/Redesign Officer, hired by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, who will be granted some additional latitude in addressing the poor academic performance of the schools. There may be considerable changes to these bills over the next month, but in short, will focus on the role of the state in intervening in those lowest performing schools.

FEDERAL

Edward M. Kennedy National Service Act

President Obama signed the Edward M. Kennedy National Service Act on April 21st. Written by Senators Kennedy and Orrin Hatch, this bipartisan legislation will provide for a sweeping overhaul and expansion of national service programs. Building on the success of AmeriCorps, the legislation authorizes the creation of focused "Corps" to work on specific areas of national need such as Education, Healthy Futures, Clean Energy, Opportunity, and Veterans. The \$5.7 billion National Service bill triples the size of the AmeriCorps service program over the next eight years and expands ways for students to earn money for college. As service early in life can put more youth on a path to a lifetime of service, the Act strengthens the current Learn and Serve program and authorizes a Summer of Service program for middle and high school students. More information is available online at <http://www.nationalservice.gov>.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding these or other legislative issues, please contact Lisa Hansknecht, Legislative Director, at 517-335-4913.